THE MINISTER OF PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS (SHRI MANI SHANKAR AIYAR): (a) to (d) Hindustan Petroleum Corporation Limited (HPCL) are considering various projects at or near their Visakhapatnam Refinery. Among these is a low-cost expansion of the existing refinery and a grassroots export-oriented refinery. These projects are at a preliminary stage of discussion. No firm decision has been taken. Therefore,cost estimates or schedules are not yet available.

Adulteration of petroleum products in Bihar

†2987. SHRI BASHISTHA NARAIN SINGH: Will the Minister of PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government are aware of the adulteration in petroleum products in the rural areas and small towns;

(b) if so, what action Government propose to take to check the same and also to ensure proper supply of commodities to consumers;

(c) the number of raids conducted during the last six months by the officers on the dealers/distributors of various oil companies situated in Buxar district of Bihar; and

(d) the action taken against the persons found guilty during those raids?

THE MINISTER OF PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS (SHRI MANI SHANKAR AIYAR): (a) The possibility of adulteration of petrol/diesel by some unscrupulous elements cannot be ruled out due to huge price difference between petrol/diesel and various adulterants available in the market and the easy miscibility of these products with petrol/diesel.

(b) The Government/Public Sector Oil Marketing Companies (OMCs) have taken the following steps to check adulteration:

(i) Under the Control Orders issued by the Government to prevent fuel adulteration, under the Essential Commodities Act, 1955, State Governments are empowered to take action against those indulging in adulteration. Government have taken up this matter

† Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.

with all the State Governments/Union Territory Administrations to step up inspections/surprise checks to ensure that adulteration-related activities are minimized and to exercise vigil/conduct inspections at various private firms, factories, processing units, etc., under their jurisdictions so as to identify the perpetrators of adulteration and take stringent action against them within the available legal framework.

(ii) OMCs undertake regular and surpise inspections of Retail Outlets and also take action under Marketing Discipline guidelines (MDG) and Dealership Agreements against those indulging in adulteration and malpractices. MDG provide for penalty of termination of delership in cases of adulteration being estabilished.

(iii) As advised by the Government, Oil Marketing Companies (OMCs) have created a separate wing to report to a Director other than Director (Marketing), which will oversee and monitor all activities and operations to curb adulteration and specify norms and guidelines in this regard.

(iv) Keeping in view the misuse/diversion of SKO for adulteration, the import of SKO by private parties has been canalized through OMCs.

(v) OMCs have introduced new tamper proof tank-truck locking systems to prevent en route adulteration by transporters.

(vi) Information Technology (IT) solutions like monitoring movement of tank trucks through Global positoning System (GPS) and monitoring level of fuel tanks in Retail Outlets through retail automation are being introduced.

(vii) Branding of Retail outlets and third party certification of Retail outlets have been initiated by the OMCs.

(viii) Effective 2nd October 2005, Government launched the Jan kerosene Pariyojana as a pilot project in 417 blocks covering 23 States and one Union Territory for a period of six months with a view to strengthening and streamlining the infrastructure for kerosene distribution and involving the Gram Sabhas and Gram Panchayats and State Panchayati Raj Institutions in the

supervision of PDS kerosene distribution, so as to ensure that entitled beneficiaries actually receive their entitlement and diversion to adulteration and black-marketing is capped, reversed and eventually eliminated.

Measures to check adulteration are kept under continuous review of the Government.

(c) The officers of Public Sector Oil Marketing Companies conducted 12 inspections during April-September, 2005 of the dealers in Buxar district of Bihar. No malpractices/irregularities were detected during these inspections.

(d) Does not arise, in view of the reply to part (c) above.

ONGC's Investment in oil refineries

†2988. SHRIMATI MAYA SINGH: Will the Minister of PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that a proposal of ONGC, a Government undertaking for making investment in Mangalore, Kakinada and Barmer oil refineries is under Government's consideration;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) the amount proposed to be invested; and

(d) what is Government's reaction thereto?

THE MINISTER OF PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS (SHRI MANI SHANKAR AIYAR): (a) to (d) Oil and Natural Gas Corporation Limited (ONGC), through its subsidiary, Mangalore Refinery and Petrochemicals Limited (MRPL), have initiated efforts to consider setting up the following refineries:-

(i) A refinery in Mangalore as envisaged in the Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) signed by ONGC with the Karnataka Industrial Area Development Board (KIADB) and Karnataka Chambers of Commerce & Industry (KCCI);

† Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.